



Community Building and Communications Workgroup Meeting Minutes January 16, 2009

Items Relevant to Other Workgroups

All Workgroups: none specific.

- See discussion items “MSHDA Campaign Web site update” for info on corrections to the old Web site and progress on the new one.
- See “Alignment with Voices for Action (V4A)” for an overview of alignment between the two initiatives and progress being made to create this alliance.

Attendees

Erin Skene-Pratt (Chair)
Judy Crockett
Jerrie Lynn Gibbs
Mike Harris
Deb Horak
Mary Lou Keenon
Bill Reid
Kathy Swantek
Jeff Padden, PPA
Joe Quick, PPA

Discussion Items

Review of Agenda, Materials and Previous Assignments

- CBC Meeting Summary of December 2, 2008 reviewed and approved.
- Review of next steps and assignments from December 2 meeting. See tasks completed section below for detailed account of what was accomplished since the December meeting.
- Taskgroup 1.1 survey results and a Strategy 2 internal communications flow chart were included in materials.

Results and Relevance of 1.1 Taskgroup Survey on Communication Plans

- There were 60 respondents in total. About half of these were communications people.
- Results of each survey question were reviewed and discussed for relevance. In particular:
 - Question 2: “Who are your key audiences?”
 - ◆ Local officials’ percentages were low. This could be an opportunity for development and outreach to legislators, etc.
 - The group should think about how to influence Congressmen across the state to expand support for and communication about the Campaign and its goals.
 - Erin explained false barriers experienced in the non-profit sector with regard to interaction with legislators. Particularly, that people think they can’t lobby or contact their political leaders.

- ◆ The team is talking about education and delivery of information to legislators about homelessness and the Campaign's goals.
- Question 3: "How are those messages typically delivered to the key audiences?"
 - ◆ Not surprising that paid media percentage was far lower than free media, presentations and one-on-one communications due to the high cost of advertisement.
 - ◆ "Other" delivery methods offered included (write-ins): newspaper ads, e-mailed articles/letters, quarterly newsletters, RESA-produced DVD, newsletters, street-based outreach and publications, provided data for documents or Web sites, posted items, word of mouth, etc.
- Question 6: "How often do you use outside consultants for your external communications?"
 - ◆ Not surprising that "Never" was a large response (36.1%), but surprising that it wasn't higher (30.6% said "Rarely"; 22.2% said "Some of the time"; and 2.8% said "Most of the time").
- These results will be helpful to the workgroups and taskgroups. The groups can get whatever analysis they need on this data.
- Jeff suggested that the survey results pointed to the need for local community planning tools; if the team created this tool/template and put it on the Web site, people would use it.
 - Deb Horak said we could put this tool on the Web site.
 - It was suggested that sample press releases and press release templates could also be posted.
- The survey respondents were not anonymous. The team has a list of these agencies, and how they responded to and communicated with the public.
 - Respondents included:
 - ◆ Kurt Baab, MPRI community coordinator for NW Michigan
 - ◆ Yvonne Jackson, another community coordinator
 - ◆ A lot were from the prisoner side of this issue.
- The workgroup will check to see if they are on the list of respondents that are receiving the eNews.
- Bill suggested sending the results of the survey back to the respondents in an e-mail that thanks them for their response.
- Mary Lou suggested a summary of the results be published in the eNews.

Other Projects that Should be Publicized

- Mary Lou Keenon and Jerrie Lynn Gibbs discussed groups doing "Homeless Connects" projects.
 - Communities provide a one-day event for support of the homeless. The where and when of these events should be more widely publicized.
 - The project began in San Francisco, but Michigan may now have the most Homeless Connects projects.
 - ◆ On the 27th, the Grand Rapids event at Van Andel expects to pull in approximately 1600 homeless, or more.
 - This project brings the private sector into the fight against homelessness.
 - January 31 is the second of these projects in Mike's region. The first one had nearly 200 people attending, but there were over 400 volunteers.
 - Bill said there were only 9 people at their local event, but 6 of them were helped that day.

- Lansing's event at Eastern High School this year was attended by Phil Mangano. Over 2,000 people attended.
- Programs/events like these are incredible media opportunities. These projects can serve as a catalyst for other programs and for a heightened awareness of homelessness issues across the state.

MSHDA Campaign Web Site Update

- After an audit of the Campaign Web site issues, the current site has been updated and fixed.
 - Bad links were fixed and removed.
 - Some outdated information was removed.
 - The site, while not entirely informative yet, is less embarrassing. A congratulations was given to the workgroup and MSHDA for getting this done quickly.
- Deb spoke about the new Web site. The site map is nearly complete, and the team at MSHDA is almost ready to sign off on the structure of the site.
 - She reiterated the importance of having data available on the site, putting templates on it for the homelessness community to pull from, tools to educate the homelessness audience, etc.
- Mary Lou stressed that everything will be branded with the newest Campaign logo image, so it is recognizable. There will also be:
 - A press release template
 - Presentations, to include, perhaps, presentations posted by the regions, other agencies and organizations in the homelessness community.
 - A forum for sharing ideas, furthering the image and messages of the Campaign, etc.

Defining Internal and External Communication

- Internal communication includes the leadership of the Campaign. They are:
 - The Departmental Resource Team
 - The statewide workgroups (Community Building and Communication; Employment, Income and Supportive Services; Housing Assistance and Models; Planning, Implementation, Measurement and Information Technology; and Training)
 - Regional representatives from the regional councils.
- External communication includes the rest of those involved in the fight against homelessness. They are:
 - The media
 - Legislators, politicians and local leaders
 - Continuums of care
 - Regional and local agencies and organizations
- These definitions were agreed upon, and Joe was asked to add these definitions to the strategy descriptions on the Action Plan.

1.2 Taskgroup Actions

(1.2 Action: "Develop a plan for state-wide coordinated communication...")

- The taskgroup, led by Judy Crockett, met both December 9 and January 13.
- Reviewed the "who" of external communication as discussed in the December 9 taskgroup meeting (see minutes).
- Discussed tools for communicating:

- *Facebook*: It was discovered that MSHDA employees (and all State employees) are denied access to Facebook. While some members had created a page and joined the Campaign's group page, it could not be accessed from the office.
 - ◆ Mary Lou said this may change, as she will likely request that all MSHDA communications staff (and others that will need access) will be authorized to access Facebook as a networking tool. This is being worked on.
 - ◆ Creative Cities Summit has a Facebook page, and might provide an example.
- Twitter was also mentioned as an updating communications tool.
- Mary Lou, Jeff, and Pace & Partners discussed a longer, more facilitated discussion with regard to creating the taskgroup's statewide communication plan for the Campaign, and integrating it with the Authority-wide communications plan being designed for the four pillars of MASHDA. One of these pillars is homelessness.
 - This meeting would include a discussion of what the workgroup wants to see in the communication plan (perhaps collected from a workgroup survey).
 - While Pace & Partners is in the midst of designing the MSHDA'-wide plan, Jeff suggested that the CBC workgroup would design the Campaign plan, which would address communication beyond that of MSHDA; including others in the homelessness community.
 - The proposed meeting would be a tightly run, two-hour meeting/exchange with the 1.2 taskgroup, MSHDA reps, Pace & Partners, and PPA (and perhaps other CBC members).
 - ◆ Concern was shown for the two-hour time constraint, but it was stressed that there would have to be preparation work and the meeting would have to be tightly structured.
 - The end deliverable would be a comprehensive outline of such a plan. It will need to be decided who will actually *write* this plan.
 - The session will need to be planned. Jeff and Deb will plan this and include Judy in their communications when doing so. Joe will send Deb a list of who needs to be involved in this meeting and their contact info. The meeting should be planned around the next workgroup meeting.

Strategy 2 Taskgroup and the Campaign to End Homelessness eNews

- Sign-up
 - Despite efforts, not everyone in the workgroup is receiving the newsletter. The team needs to make sure that this is happening.
 - Need to explore ways to get more people signed up. Should have 2000 easy.
 - ◆ Perhaps put sign-up links into e-mail signature blocks
- A meeting was held between Mike, Connie, Jourdan and Mary Lou.
 - Questions to be addressed:
 - ◆ What communication is already happening? What does the group still need to do?
 - ◆ Who determines the info and stories that are included?
 - ◆ What info do we want to communicate in the newsletter?
 - ◆ As the eNews gets larger, how do we maintain it?
 - Determinations of communications and responsibility flow:
 - ◆ Mary Lou, Jourdan Clandening, Janet Irrer and Sally Harrison will make the determinations about content and funnel through the workgroup.
 - ◆ Jeff's sense is that the taskgroup has a strategic responsibility for what the content is. A draft of the eNews would go to the taskgroup through Erin or PPA.

- Content ideas and suggestions:
 - Mike suggested continuum of care groups pull info from regions and report to regional coordinators. Then info for newsletter could be funneled through the workgroup to Jourdan.
 - Mary Lou suggested a defined content strategy/structure, to include recurring articles like success stories, Project Connects stories, etc.
 - Changing our minds about content is okay, as long as the changes are explicit in the content structure design.
- Essentials for each issue:
 - Clear strategic purpose
 - Standardized format
 - Follow MSHDA's style; all editing done at MSHDA for style consistency
 - Mike will see draft of each eNews before published
 - Need to post eNews and minutes more quickly and be consistent in timing
- Timing: All articles due one week before delivery date. Goal delivery date of the eNews is the 15th of each month.

Alignment With Voices for Action (V4A)

- The purposes of this alliance will include combining resources and allow those involved with both campaigns/initiatives to attend fewer meetings.
- Discussed at the DRT meeting. DHS and others involved all seemed to be on board for this alliance.
- The structure of such an alliance is being worked on.
 - Currently, V4A is organizing by the same regions the Campaign to End Homelessness.
 - Regional Councils would likely have two chairs and hold double meetings.
 - DRT would evolve into state-level leadership for both groups, and be restructured.
 - The potential for aligning the workgroups is still being discussed.
- Hopefully, this alliance will be worked out in the next 30-60 days.

Tasks Completed

- Survey of communications plans (1.1 taskgroup) was distributed in December, and results were analyzed and distributed to the workgroup.
- Joe sent e-mails to those survey respondents that expressed a willingness to share their written communication plans. He has received no responses to date.
- Mike Harris and Mary Lou Keenon discussed Action Plan Strategy 2, and Mike and Connie Hackney designed a flow chart to map internal communication, and to identify "missing links" in the communication structure.
- PPA, MSHDA, and the CBC workgroup collaborated to audit, fix and update the current Campaign's Web site to be more functional and less embarrassing. It was accomplished quickly and efficiently.

Tasks Assigned

- Joe Quick still needs to assess which members have yet to be assigned to or volunteered for a taskgroup so they can be encouraged to do so.
- PPA and Jourdan Clandening will collaborate to get the survey respondents on the eNews list.

- PPA or MSHDA will include a summary of results in the eNews.
- Joe Quick will add the definitions of “internal communication” and “external communication” to strategy descriptions in the CBC Action Plan.
- Jeff Padden and Deb Horak to plan for 1.2 taskgroup external communication plan session, keeping Judy Crockett in the communication loop throughout the planning. Session should be planned around next workgroup meeting. MSHDA and PPA will coordinate meeting materials.
- Joe Quick will send Deb Horak a list of who needs to be involved in the communications plan meeting and their contact info (1.2 taskgroup members, Jeff, Joe, Erin, Pace & Partners, Mary Lou, etc.).
- Mike Harris, Jourdan Clandening, Mary Lou Keenon, and Connie Hackney will have another meeting regarding the eNews in February.
- Jerrie Lynn Gibbs will redistribute eNews sign-up to entities across the state. She will also discuss with Sally and Janet the possibility of including the eNews sign-up link in signature blocks.
- “Thank you” e-mails with results of the 1.1 survey will be sent to survey respondents.

Next Meeting

Thursday, February 12, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon